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United States Patent [19][11] **Patent Number:** **5,865,546****Ganthier et al.**[45] **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 2, 1999**[54] **MODULAR KEYBOARD FOR USE IN A
COMPUTER SYSTEM**[75] Inventors: **James Ganthier**, Spring; **John Landry**,
Tomball, both of Tex.[73] Assignee: **Compaq Computer Corporation**,
Houston, Tex.[21] Appl. No.: **920,997**[22] Filed: **Aug. 29, 1997**[51] **Int. Cl.**⁶ **B41J 5/08**[52] **U.S. Cl.** **400/489**; 345/168; 364/708.1;
341/22[58] **Field of Search** 345/168; 400/489;
341/22; 361/680; 364/708.1[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

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& Tayon[57] **ABSTRACT**

A computer system including a modular keyboard assembly allows input device modules to be inserted into the keyboard assembly. The modular keyboard assembly includes a plurality of recessed opening in which an input device module can be inserted. A connector on the input device module mates with a connector in the recessed opening, thereby providing electrical contact between the input device module and the keyboard assembly. Each input device module can be replaced by the user with a different input device module providing flexibility to the user as well as minimizing the amount of cabling that typically confronts the user. A controller in the keyboard assembly determines the types of input device modules coupled to the keyboard assembly.

21 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets